



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Representative Lucy S Dathan

February 21, 2020

IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 5104 - AN ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPORT, SALE AND POSSESSION OF AFRICAN ELEPHANTS, LIONS, LEOPARDS, BLACK RHINOCEROS, WHITE RHINOCEROS AND GIRAFFES.

Good morning Senator Cohen, Representative Demicco, Senator Miner, Representative Harding and members of the Environment Committee.

I would like to express my support for House Bill 5104, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPORT, SALE AND POSSESSION OF AFRICAN ELEPHANTS, LIONS, LEOPARDS, BLACK RHINOCEROS, WHITE RHINOCEROS AND GIRAFFES. All of the species, also known as "The Big 5", addressed in this bill are vulnerable, threatened or endangered. Many of the countries in Africa where these animals originate, are working to protect these endangered animals and I believe as such, people or entities should not profit or own such items. In recent years, there has been an increased amount of trophy hunting. From 2005-2014, it is estimated that at least 1.2M animals were legally killed and brought to the US. American tourists account for majority of the lions killed for sport. This was highlighted in 2015, where an American dentist lured a male lion, Cecil off his land in the all Hwange National Park in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe and shot him with a bow and arrow. Cecil had been studied for years by a team from the University of Oxford and was a major attraction in the National Park. This senseless killing marked a major global outrage and wide attention to this issue.

Connecticut does play a role in the trophy hunting of Africa's Big 5. From 2005-2015, 59 trophy hunting permits were issued to Connecticut residents by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service so people could hunt and kill leopards for their trophies. Six additional permits were provided to CT residents to kill African elephants in Botswana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. And from 2005-2016, Connecticut residents killed 39 lions and one giraffe and imported their trophies. The Big 5

African Trophies Act recognizes that legal trophy hunting as one of the main reasons Africa's Big Five face extinction. It sends a strong message to CT, Washington and the rest of the country that trophy hunting needs to end to protect threatened species who are already fighting for the lives as they face poaching and habitat loss. **

This bill would not criminalize museums or other residents who have in current possession (or have had in possession, in the past) these items.

I would encourage the committee to vote in favor for this bill, to move to the next stage of the political process.

Thank you in advance for considering this bill.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy Dathan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lucy Dathan
State Representative
142nd district

**Note: Although CT is not a designated port (There are 18 designated ports for wildlife trophies to come through in the U.S. and New York is the busiest), however residents can pay extra money for a non-designated port permit